# The Current Supreme Court (as of 2010-2011 session)

(Typical political leanings indicated by position of pictures, left indicating liberal, right indicating conservative, middle indicating moderate)



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| **John Roberts** | **Chief Justice** | **Appointed by:** George W. Bush | **2005** |
| * **Considered a moderate conservative** * Is the third youngest Chief Justice in American History (50 in 2005) * Received the most Senate votes for confirmation (for a Chief Justice) | | | |

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| **Antonin Scalia** | **Associate Justice** | **Appointed by:** Ronald Reagan | **1986** |
| * **Is the leading Conservative on the Court** * **Interprets laws based upon original intent of the founders** * Considered to be “mean-spirited” and “argumentative” – typically asks the most questions in cases and takes pot shots at fellow justices in opinions | | | |



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| **Anthony Kennedy** | **Associate Justice** | **Appointed by:** Ronald Reagan | **1988** |
| * **Considered a “swing” vote** (generally leans to right on Social Issues * **Checkered voting record** but has liberal interpretations of the 1st * Not a “Massachusetts Kennedy” Amendment and 14th Amendment) | | | |



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| **Clarence Thomas** | **Associate Justice** | **Appointed by:** H.W. Bush | **1991** |
| * **Considered a moderate Conservative (generally sides with Scalia)** * **Interprets laws based upon original intent of the founders, except 1st amend.** * 2nd African-American to serve on Supreme Court * Faced a bitter confirmation battle in 1991 over allegations of sexual harassment | | | |



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| Ruth Bader Ginsburg | **Associate Justice** | **Appointed by:** Bill Clinton | **1993** |
| * **Considered a moderate liberal (was a former leading lawyer of the ACLU)** * **Against “judicial legislation” or “legislating from the bench”** * 2nd woman to serve on Supreme Court | | | |

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| **Stephen Breyer** | **Associate Justice** | **Appointed by:** Bill Clinton | **1994** |
| * **Considered a moderate liberal** * **Takes a “pragmatic approach” to Constitutional issues** * Leading expert on administrative law * Played “key role” in reforming federal sentencing guidelines prior to being selected | | | |



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| **Samuel Alito** | **Associate Justice** | **Appointed by:** George W. Bush | **2006** |
| * **Considered a moderate Conservative (with a libertarian streak)** * **Interprets laws based upon original intent of the founders, except 1st amend.** * Typically votes with conservative members | | | |



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| **Sonya Sotomayor** | **Associate Justice** | **Appointed by:** Barack Obama | 2009 |
| * **Considered a moderate liberal** * 1st person of Hispanic decent to serve on the Supreme Court (3rd woman) * Only person to be nominated by three separate Presidents to three different positions (District, Appeals, and Supreme Court) | | | |



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| **Elena Kagan** | **Associate Justice** | **Appointed by:** Barack Obama | **2010** |
| * **Considered a moderate liberal (record on court not evident yet)** * 4th woman named to the Supreme Court * Solicitor General of the United States prior to nomination, no prior judicial experience | | | |

# Supreme Court Quick Facts



* Justices serve “lifelong” terms. Vacancies occur only when a justice retires, a justice dies, or a justice is impeached.
* When a vacancy occurs, the President nominates a person fitting of the position who must be approved by the Senate
* The longest service on the Supreme Court was 36 years, 6 months (William Douglas, 1975)
* The shortest service on the Supreme Court was 5 months, 10 days (Thomas Johnson, 1793)
* The Chief Justice must be nominated for the post even if that person is currently sitting on the bench. Once named Chief Justice, that person cannot be “downgraded” to an Associate Justice position.
* Arguments before the Supreme Court have never been videotaped. Only rarely has a case been audiotaped for media/historical purposes.
* The yearly session of the Supreme Court begins on the first Monday of October and runs thru late June or early July. The term alternates between two weeks of hearing cases (called “sittings”) and two weeks of recesses. Up to 24 cases can be heard in a single “sitting.”
* Each side is given 30 minutes to argue their case and no witnesses can be called.
* During Court sessions, the Justices sit according to seniority, with the Chief Justice in the center, and the Associate Justices on alternating sides. In the Justices' private conferences, the current practice is for Justices to speak and vote in order of seniority**.**
* The most junior Associate Justice is tasked with any menial labor the Justices may require as they convene alone, such as answering the door of their conference room, serving coffee, and transmitting the orders of the court to the court's clerk.
* For the year 2010, an Associate Justice is paid $213,900 and the Chief Justice $223,500
* The Supreme Court has had 6, 7, 9, and 10 members in its history

